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AN ADVENTURE IN THE IDAHO MINES

JOHN J. HEALY

EDITED BY CLYDE McLEMORE

INTRODUCTION

Under the caption **FRONTIER SKETCHES** this narrative by John J. Healy, local editor and business manager, appeared serially in 1878 in the little and now long ago suspended **Fort Benton, Montana, Record**, of which a fairly complete file is to be found in the Historical Library of Montana at Helena. Except for the omission of certain redundant or digressive matter it is here presented as then published. "Mr. Healy does not need to varnish his sketches," said the **Helena Independent**, February 27, 1878, "for his adventures in these mountains are as full of romance as the most brilliant of imaginative writers could desire . . . and they are records of facts."

John J. Healy was born in County Cork, Ireland, in 1840. Landing in America in his eighteenth year, he found that the army was accepting recruits for service in the so-called Utah or Mormon war. Here then was ready employment. When he enlisted (March 23, 1858) at Buffalo, New York, he was recorded as twenty-one years of age. Recorded also: blue eyes, dark hair, dark complexion and height five feet five inches. The newly enrolled private of Company B, 2nd U. S. Dragoons was at once off for far-away Fort Leavenworth and thence, with many other recruits, again off for the Far West.

Two years of service in the region of the Bear and Wasatch mountain ranges and upon the plains north, west and south of the great Salt Lake taught him how to ride and handle a horse, how to manipulate fire arms and a hunting knife, and something of the character and habits of Indians. When he was mustered out August 1, 1860, at "Camp on Porte Neuf River, Oregon Route," he was a seasoned veteran of the frontier.

Now free, he again turned westward. There perchance would be the end of the rainbow, and maybe gold—for those who could find it, and take it. He went to Florence in what later became Idaho and mined there without success. In 1862 he decided on another adventure. Just here his narrative begins.

Immediately after the events with which the narrative ends and in accordance with the plan there mentioned, to "endeavor to find our way to Deer Lodge," he came to what is now Montana, where for more than twenty-three years he was a respected citizen of prominence.

For a time mining engaged his attention, but in the spring of 1866 he established a ranch and a ferry across the Sun river on the Helena and Fort Benton road. With a partner, two years later, he constructed a toll bridge. A few years later a flour mill was added to his growing interests. After serving as superintendent of schools, he was elected sheriff of Chouteau county. Other activities at intervals were fur trading, journalism, and the hotel business at Fort Benton.

When in the fall of 1877 the Nez Perces on their attempted escape to Canada were taken captive by General Nelson A. Miles at the Bear Paw mountains, in which engagement Chief Looking Glass was among those killed, it was Healy who carried the news to Fort Benton. The eighty miles of intervening foothills, coulees and prairie were traversed as speedily as horse could travel. Soon thereafter he joined General Alfred Terry's treaty expedition to Sitting Bull's camp at Wood mountain, Saskatchewan. When the peace council failed, it was Healy who made the notable ride of 300 miles to the telegraph station at Helena.

His removal to Alaska in December, 1885, said the Choteau, Montana, **Calumet** (December 18), was a "serious loss" to Fort Benton. He was commended as a "leading spirit" in political contests, "the originator and promoter of many successful enterprises for advancing the welfare of communities in which he has resided . . . one of the most efficient, daring yet charitable officers of the law."

During twenty-two eventful years in Alaska and the Klondike region he made more than one modest fortune—and lost it. The days of the great gold rush on the upper Yukon, 1897-99, found him manager and one of the principal proprietors of the North American Transportation and Trading Company, with headquarters at Dawson. Under his supervision were the company's several stores and several steamboats on the river.

Leaving Alaska in 1907, he settled for a time at Seattle, but soon went to California, where at the time of his death he was interested in some mining properties. At San Francisco, September 15, 1908, the daring, restless, lovable Irish immigrant came to the end of his life.

Additional information may be found in an interview published in the **New York Herald**, February 24, 1895, at which time Healy was in that city on business of the North American Transportation and Trading Company; in an article by Forrest Crissey, "Bucking the Hudson Bay Company," **Saturday Evening Post**, June 20, 1903, dealing with Healy's fur trading activities; and in a sketch, with a photograph, in **Outing Magazine**, Vol. 51 (December, 1907), p. 347.

WILL O' THE WISP

About the first of May a favored few received information that a party of miners consisting of Jeff Standiferd, Jim Glasscock, Tom Reilly, Pinkham, Keenan and others were fitting up a fleet of boats for the purpose of ascending the Salmon river to a quartz lead discovered by George Orr, Captain DeLacy, Beaver Dick and other men. . . .

Bostwick was among the first to get wind of this and as he was always ready for a stampede he determined at once to start for the new mines. He insisted that I should accompany him, and after considering the matter well I concluded it would not take more than 20 days to make the trip and return, and as the snow around Florence had become so deep that work had to be sus-

pendent I thought that perhaps it would be as well to make the journey as to remain idling away the time in camp.

Bostwick knew of a skiff that could be bought on Salmon river, and having this in view there was nothing else required for the journey but provisions, ammunition and our guns. To pack our outfits did not require much time and, provided with snow shoes, we struck out for the Salmon river via Lardo, a distance of not more than 12 or 14 miles. . . .

I little thought at the time that I was leaving Florence forever. My intention was to return within three weeks whether the trip proved successful or not, but I never saw the spot again and probably never will return to that part of the country. . . .

The inducements to make this trip were certainly attractive enough. The vein which Beaver Dick and others claimed to have discovered was said to contain quartz assaying \$3,000 to the ton. . . . I was not overconfident that anything richer than Florence would be found but thought there might be some truth in the statements made by the professed discoverers and that it would be as well to locate a claim in the district . . . and if I did not conclude it would be advisable to work it myself I might sell at a good price, pocket the money and return to my old stamping grounds.

The skiff, for which we had already paid an exorbitant price, was found at the end of our journey over the snow. It was neither a substantial nor an elegant affair. We discovered it buried deep in the sand, and on hauling it out found that it consisted of two bottom boards, two side boards and two end boards, the whole caulked with flour sacks and pitched with pine gum. Oars there were none, and we were obliged to substitute poles. . . .

Having made the boat as tight as we could without tools of any kind we camped to await the arrival of Standiferd and party. . . .

On the fourth day of May, 1862, Standiferd and his party consisting of ten men came along in two batteaux. Pinkham, Keenan, Sanders, Dick Ralston and two other men followed in another boat and arrived about the same time. They were all Fraser river men and some of the old miners of the country . . . and being well provided with money and provisions they were likely to

find the new gold fields if anything human could reach them. . . .

The party was greatly surprised to meet us as they supposed they were the sole possessors of the secret of the newly discovered wealth. We informed them of the extent of our information and our determination to go with them. A meeting was held and after considerable argument on both sides Standiferd and his friends agreed to let us do what they could not prevent—to follow them.

The morning of the 5th of May found us cordelling our boat up the stream, the current being too strong to pole against it.

For the first few days, in spite of our hard work, we enjoyed the change from the monotony of a mining camp to the more exhilarating life of river boating; but within a very short time our struggles with the wild river began to tell upon us, and we heartily wished ourselves back again to our mining claim in the mountains. It was nothing but cross and recross from one side of the river to the other in search of a foothold along the high and perpendicular banks. Portage after portage was made around the most dangerous rapids, many of which could be more properly termed falls, and even when the river was comparatively smooth and free from the whirlpools and rocks the bends were so short and sudden and the current so swift that we could make little or no headway against it by the use of our poles alone.

The other party, notwithstanding their greater experience and superior numbers, were the first to come to grief. While passing a most dangerous cataract, too dangerous for even one man to remain in the boat for the purpose of guiding it with a pole while the party on shore hauled it around the portage, the craft slewed around and in spite of every effort made to prevent it went over the fall with its load of provisions, bedding, tools, etc., and the whole outfit, worth \$1,500, was a total loss. This accident caused five of Standiferd's party to return, but the rest continued on their way as best they could.

As a natural result of our slow progress provisions began to grow scarce, and while it had the effect of lightening the boat somewhat and thereby diminishing our labors it was not pleasant to think of a scanty

larder under such circumstances and in such a wilderness. There was without doubt plenty of game in the country, but during the day we had no time to hunt and at night we were too tired to think of anything but resting our weary limbs.

We finally came to the largest and most dangerous fall we had yet met with. The nature of the banks was such that we could not make a portage around this boiling torrent without crossing to the other side of the river, and to do this successfully seemed equally impossible. There were really two falls but the distance between them was so short that they appeared like one. Payne, who was familiar with the most difficult points of navigation on the Fraser and other rivers, threw up the sponge when we struck the spot. . . . Standiferd led the fleet, and his progress was watched with interest by the other boats' crews. On account of the great swell caused by the plunge of the upper fall he started as low down as possible in order to avoid being swamped.

The crew of Standiferd's boat used such excellent judgment in attempting the crossing low down they would have got over the fall without difficulty had not one of the oars snapped just at the most critical moment when the entire strength of the party was required to keep the craft from turning broadside to the current. The boat, however, happened to be near the shore when the accident occurred and the presence of mind of one of the party saved the craft and its cargo. . . . One of the men jumped into the water and by good luck and quick movements reached the shore in time to secure the rope and prevent the boat from going over the fall. It was a narrow escape, however, as the stern part of the craft was extending over the fall when she was brought to.

Ralston and Pinkham started next, but from a point higher up, and finally succeeded in making a safe and expeditious crossing.

Our turn came now and the other parties held their breath as we prepared for the plunge, for no one expected our miserable tub would live to pass through the boiling torrent. To cross even as low down as the second boat had done was out of the question, as we had but two oars while the others had four. Our only chance was to

cross through the rough water close to the falls. This we did at the risk of swamping, passing into the current, mounting the swell, and then going down, down, until it seemed we were plunging to the bottom of the river never to rise again. The swell rushed over us, filling our boat with water but at the same time tossing us out into comparatively smooth water beyond the fall.

The Canadian was out as soon as our boat righted and held the boat until Payne plied the camp kettle, and in a few moments we were landed safe a hundred yards above the other boats—much to the relief and astonishment of all who witnessed our narrow escape. We were told afterwards that our boat had gone down entirely out of sight and no one expected to see us rise again.

Sometime later in the day we discovered just ahead of us a raft with two men upon it. They saw us about the same time and landed their raft at once to wait for us to come up. On reaching the spot we found the men in a starving condition. One of them was Bill Rollins, a blacksmith from Fort Owen (now Stevensville, Montana. C. M.). They had started from Fort Owen for the purpose of reaching Florence, which they supposed was on Salmon river. They entered the Salmon about 40 miles below Lemhi, and after hard work and much suffering they were obliged to abandon their horses, the trail becoming too rough for the animals to travel further.

The suffering of these men should have been a warning to us all as we were not unlikely to come to the same stage of extreme destitution. The poor fellows when we found them had nothing left but a dried bearskin which they were pounding with rocks and eating to keep themselves alive. Had we not met them as soon as we did they would certainly have gone over the falls, as they were drifting rapidly down with the current and were too weak and exhausted to save themselves if their craft had reached the stream below.

Rollins begged us to return, as it was not possible for men provided as we were to reach the point we were aiming for. But his advice was not heeded, and after sharing a portion of our provisions with them and directing them what course to take and how to avoid the falls we proceeded on our way.

As it was not more than 60 miles to the mouth of Meadow creek I have no doubt Rollins, and his partner reached their destination in safety. . . .

Before parting, I learned from these men that gold had been discovered by the Stuart brothers on Gold creek and also that Fred Burr, John Powell, Tom Adams and others were living on the creek where the road to Hell Gate crossed. This was interesting news to me as I had known some of these men years before and was not aware that they were in the country.

TRAIPSING UP THE SALMON

We continued our cordelling to the forks of the Salmon. The left fork being the longest we concluded that must be the proper course to take.

But the current proved so swift in passing round the bend we found it impossible to pull our boats against it. Nothing daunted we concluded that if we could not float the boats we could carry them across the point, the distance of about a mile, which we did, and accomplished the task in one day.

But imagine our surprise and disappointment when on examining the river after our day's work we found the stream impassable for boats, as it was simply impossible to proceed further with them in that direction. . . .

For my part I had determined some time previously to leave Standiferd and strike out ahead. This could not be very well done while we remained on the river, but now that it was evident we would have to take our packs on our backs and foot the rest of the journey I made up my mind to leave Standiferd and his crowd behind; and in order that the latter should not suspect my motive in going (to be the first to reach the coveted gold vein) I arranged with Bostwick that he should pretend to oppose my leaving. This was done and after much opposition from all sides I struck out with my pack and that night camped five miles ahead of all my companions.

While enjoying the genial glow of my lonesome campfire, a few hours after I had disposed of my frugal supper the surrounding solitude was broken by the melodious voice of Tim Driscoll, who had left his companions and was now trudging along the

trail in the direction of the spot where I had made my camp for the night.

Tim said he had left his friends because he preferred traveling with me, but knowing as I did that he belonged to the Standiferd and Reilly party I suspected that they had persuaded him to follow me for the purpose of keeping me from getting the inside track when the treasure was discovered. I said nothing, however, but started out the next morning with my self-appointed guardian and traveled with him until noon when we again camped. There we were joined by Bostwick, Perkins, Standiferd, Reilly, Pinkham, Keenan, Sanders and a few others. They stated that for a few hours after I had left they worked with the boats but concluded finally to abandon them.

Provisions being scarce in the Ralston and Standiferd party, some of them turned back that day and retraced their steps to Florence. The boats and tools were (had been) taken out of the river and covered with earth and brush to protect them from the action of the weather.

In the afternoon the party numbered 12 men, with Jeff (Standiferd) in the lead and Keenan bringing up the rear.

For a few days the trail was fair traveling but the route was through a long canyon and as the latter grew narrow the trail began to darken. Standiferd exerted all his powers of endurance to encourage the rest, and the party had hard work to keep up with him.

Beaver Dick, George Orr and Happy Jack (Jack Gun) outwalked all the others and got so far ahead on the trail that they thought it necessary to blaze trees and tie pieces of rags to the bushes to show the path they had taken. They left other signs which were not so encouraging to the weary and hungry travelers behind them. The appearance of the trees showed where they . . . had taken off the inner bark of pine trees for food. There is a thin skin next to the wood which when scraped off, tied into knots and eaten, contains considerable nutriment and will sustain life when all other articles of food are exhausted. It has even a pleasant taste, resembling the pineapple.

The distress which these men were now evidently in should perhaps have warned us to return but no one . . . thought of turn-

ing back while there was one companion ahead. . . .

After a week's travel, Standiferd with a few companions concluded to return. Before starting out on the expedition he had received the appointment of sheriff for the town of Florence and, as he stated, it was necessary for him to be there a certain day. The trip had already extended far beyond the length of time he calculated to be absent and the prospects were now not as encouraging as they had been the first week out. He very reluctantly parted with us and our party was reduced to eight men by his departure.

We were now obliged to ration ourselves with such game as we were fortunate enough to find but animals of all kinds, even the smallest birds, were scarce and almost impossible to bring down.

The trail had become so rough by this time that it was almost impossible to pick out a path for our weary feet, and the river, which was rising rapidly, compelled us to keep high up on the steep sides of the canyon and to make such a circuitous course that after a long day of weary traveling, from daylight to dark, it would have been an easy matter to have fired a pistol ball into the camp we left in the morning.

On camping for the night, after Standiferd had left us, Tom Reilly pointed to the canyon ahead of us and reminded us of our hard day's experience. He called our attention to the fact that our small stock of provisions could not last us more than a few days at the farthest and that we should then have nothing to subsist upon, even if we desired to return.

Bostwick finally agreed to return but I would not listen to any proposition that included the abandonment of our enterprise. There were men ahead, also; and to abandon them was not agreeable to any of us. The matter was finally put to a vote, resulting in seven for return and one for continuing the trip.

In the morning Reilly was for returning but Bostwick would not go back so long as any one of the party was keeping on. Perkins insisted upon following Bostwick. Reilly had \$1,500 in coin upon his person, which had become a serious burden to him in his weak and exhausted condition. He took Driscoll aside and gave him \$200 on

condition that he would remain with Bostwick. Driscoll agreed to the proposition and after bidding the party goodbye we now took up our march again, our party reduced to four men.

We made better progress after this, however, and Bostwick had the good luck to kill a deer. This gave us considerable encouragement and we proceeded to dry the meat for future use. We built a fire beneath the branches of a pine tree so that the smoke would be partially concealed. . . . Bostwick was not even satisfied with this precaution but took his gun and started up the river a short distance to reconnoitre. He returned in a few moments with a troubled expression upon his countenance and sat down near the fire without speaking. After awhile he looked up and said:

"We are watched; there are Indians around us."

"How do you know?" said I. . . .

"I have seen their tracks on the trail and know that they have discovered us."

As if to confirm the opinion of Bostwick two dogs made their appearance, attracted no doubt by the odor of the drying meat, and a moment later the eagle feathers of an Indian's head dress appeared above a rock in close proximity to our camp.

This was enough to assure us of danger and we at once took shelter behind a tree and signalled the Indians to approach. This they did after much maneuvering and extreme caution.

There were but two of the redskins, apparently, and they gave us to understand that they were Bannacks on their way down the river. We could learn nothing further from them, but their actions were suspicious and the appearance of the dogs satisfied us that there was a camp not far off.

The Indians finally started down the trail and we proceeded with our work of curing the meat and by night had it packed for an early start in the morning. We then laid down our blankets as if we intended to keep together, put out the fire and turned in; but when the night became so dark that objects could not be distinguished a few feet distant each of us quietly took a gun and blanket and scattering out among the timber laid ourselves down behind rocks and trees.

We . . . had not traveled more than a

mile up stream the following morning before we discovered fresh moccasin tracks on the trail and a few miles further on, while crossing a long bar, we discovered Indians ahead of us, and a moment later the hills were swarming with the fiends yelling and signalling to each other.

We ran for a pile of rocks and took up a position behind them, seeing which the Indians circled to the right and left of us.

We now had the river on one side and the rocks formed a fair breastwork in the only direction from which our foes were likely to approach us; therefore, we felt comparatively safe, although our ammunition was nearly exhausted and we could not afford to waste a single shot.

A day or two previous to this event we felt like men condemned to die and some of us had even calculated how many days we were likely to survive, but the appearance of the redskins had seemed to put new life into us and we were now as eager to preserve our lives as if we were on a mere pleasure excursion and in the near vicinity of our homes.

The trail from the bar led over a steep and rocky point which was less than half a mile ahead. A number of the Indians took possession of this path while others showed themselves on the trail in our rear. After securing those avenues of escape they seemed disposed to wait quietly for some demonstration on our part. . . .

Wherever we had prospected for gold the soil proved rich enough to encourage us to search still further, but after Indians came upon us we had little time to think of anything but saving our lives and we soon parted with all our mining tools and had not the means if we had the time and inclination to continue prospecting. We had discarded everything except our arms and an axe.

Driscoll and Perkins now favored making a raft and trusting ourselves to the river but Bostwick and I preferred being killed by the Indians.

SHIRT SLEEVES FOR SHOES

We traveled unmolested for three days more after the Indians had disappeared. . . .

Our provisions were all consumed and we had not tasted food of any kind for two days when we reached the north fork of

the Salmon and found a spot where Orr and party had evidently camped for a day or two.

Here Bostwick killed one grouse which we carefully divided, giving each man an equal share.

Our friends ahead were evidently faring no better than ourselves. The point where they had rested was marked by a tree which they had used to bridge the stream, and the camp was at the point of a fine appearing quartz ledge which resembled very much the spot we were in search of. It had no interest for us now, however, as we were thinking more of our stomachs than of gold.

Our condition was alarming. There was no sign of any kind of game and we were actually starving.

We tried to appease our hunger by eating lambs quarters, but they sickened us and added to our sufferings.

We left the river and took to the mountains in hope of finding game. Our route led through high, rolling hills with cement gravel pillars and banks, well watered by numerous streams and having the appearance of a gold bearing country. But as we were unable to find any game we soon left the high country and took to the river again, striking the latter near the mouth of the south fork.

While camped here drying our clothes, which had become saturated from heavy rainfalls, we were surprised by the sudden flashing up of a fire, three times in succession, on the opposite side of the river, followed by other flashes here and there along the stream. We knew the Indian signals but too well and our proposed rest for that night was ended. We moved on again until completely exhausted we lay down in a clump of willows and did not wake until the sun was high up in the heavens.

The country was now very open and there was little chance for escape in case of attack. Hunger began to tell seriously upon us and our progress was extremely slow.

We were all barefooted, except for a few rags which we had torn from our shirt sleeves and wrapped around our feet. We had thrown away everything except our arms, and Perkins had even parted with his gun.

By some landmarks known to one of the

party we believed we were approaching Fort Lemhi, an old Mormon fort abandoned some . . . years previous. We knew the place had been deserted but we tried to persuade ourselves that it was again occupied or that at least we should find a volunteer crop of vegetables growing upon the soil that had formerly been cultivated.

For three days more we struggled along, our hopes centered on reaching the fort. Our bill of fare consisted of wild garlic, varied with an occasional sun flower or a mouthful of grass, and although we exerted ourselves to travel rapidly our march could not have exceeded three to five miles per day.

At length, on the 12th day of June, we were surprised and overjoyed to discover Fort Lemhi in the distance, and so positive were we that our sufferings were now at an end we forgot our hunger and felt as happy and as hopeful as if toil and danger were unknown to us. We could imagine we saw smoke curling from the chimney of the house, people moving about the doors, and could even smell the savory odor of a dinner cooking.

But, alas! What a cruel disappointment was in store for us. On reaching the fort we found it completely deserted, and not an ounce of food of any kind within its walls.

Before reaching the building Driscoll and Perkins had given out and refused to move a step further. They had indeed become too weak and exhausted to travel on the day previous, but by urging and assisting them we had managed to get them along a few hundred yards at a time.

Bostwick . . . not only never complained of his own suffering but always had a word of encouragement for those who lacked his nerve and power of endurance. He sat down beside Driscoll and Perkins and begged them to keep up their courage and not to discourage the rest of us by giving up when a few miles further might bring us within reach of succor. . . .

Shortly after reaching the fort a solitary prairie chicken made its appearance in the grass about a hundred yards distant. Bostwick's unerring rifle was pointed at the bird in an instant . . . but exhausted and weak from hunger as he was it seemed hardly possible that he could shoot with any degree of accuracy. I therefore begged him to aim for the body of the bird instead of the neck

or head as was customary. The report of his fifteen-pound rifle was the only reply, and the chicken fell over dead with its head neatly scalped. . . .

After reaching the fort and consulting together we concluded that the only chance was for Bostwick to start out alone and endeavor to reach Deer Lodge or Beaverhead while the rest remained at the fort. The chance for his return in time to save us, or indeed of his reaching the points named, was very small but it was our only hope. . . .

RESCUED AT LEMHI

Bostwick very reluctantly consented to make the trip and Driscoll, whose mind was now wandering and who already (had) attempted to take his own life, insisted that he was all right and that he would accompany Bostwick, whether the latter wanted him to or not.

There was a bare possibility that Bostwick should he succeed in finding the mountaineers' wagon road from Snake river, might fall in with some emigrant train and obtain provisions from them, even if he should not be able to reach the settlements. With this hope in view, but probably with a strong belief that he had seen us for the last time, the brave fellow started on his errand of mercy, followed by the now nearly insane Driscoll. . . .

The two men had hardly passed from our sight before they returned, closely followed by three mounted men . . . the advance of a train party from Salt Lake City on their way to the Florence mines. One of the three, who was called Mormon Joe, had lived at Lemhi before the abandonment. . . . Joe had told (the party) that gold had been discovered in the vicinity of Lemhi . . . and they were under the impression that Florence was located in the neighborhood and had started out with Joe acting as guide to the old fort.

We learned with regret that the train was some 30 miles behind and would not be up for a day or two at least and might be detained much longer by the rough nature of the roads. We told the men the condition we were in and begged them to save our lives by returning to the train and procuring us some provisions as soon as possible. They agreed to do so and rode

away after promising to return by ten o'clock the next morning. . . .

But the night was one of long, weary suffering. . . .

I had with me 125 ounces of gold dust tied in a buckskin bag, but its weight had become burdensome and it now lay in one corner of the hut where I had carelessly thrown it . . . and I would gladly have given it all for its weight in flour. . . .

Hour after hour dragged wearily along until at last we had nearly relapsed into hopeless despair. We blamed ourselves for trusting the promises of the three men and wished that one of us had gone with them or that Bostwick had not given up the journey he had started upon.

To our great joy, however, the strangers finally returned with provisions enough to last for weeks. The sight of the food made us ravenous and we would have filled ourselves at once without waiting to cook an ounce of it. . . .

On the 14th day of June our eyes were gladdened by the appearance of the train moving down the valley. . . .

After a few days of rest Bostwick and I procured horses from Mendenhall (Jack Mendenhall, owner of the freight train) and went down to the north fork of the Salmon and procured specimens of ore from the ledges that had attracted our attention on the way up. We here discovered traces of the rest of our party which had been ahead of us from the spot where we abandoned the boats. We saw where they had made a difficult crossing and, what was more satisfactory, we found the trail of another party of white men who had evidently overtaken them. We afterwards learned that Captain (W. W.) DeLacy and party, while in search of the same lead we were looking for, had found Orr, Beaver Dick and party in a famishing condition and in fact had saved their lives as the train party had saved ours. . . .

On our way back to Lemhi . . . (occurred) a slight adventure with a large grizzly bear of the feminine gender, the largest and fiercest animal of the kind I ever saw. She proved too much for our rifles and we were obliged to let her trot away followed by her two cubs.

On arriving at the fort we found Mendenhall and his companions entertaining a surprise party. They were accustomed to corral the stock within the fort at night and in the morning at daylight to let the animals out to graze on the hills, guarded only by a single herder. On the morning previous to our return the stock was driven out as usual but the herder being detained at the fort for some purpose or other did not follow the herd for some moments after it had passed out of the corral. As the animals trotted along a war party of Indians concealed by the willows rushed out with their lariats and attempted to rope the horses.

Fortunately, the herder came out in time to see the thieves and give the alarm, and then ride after the herd, firing his revolver at the Indians as he went. Mendenhall and the rest of the men, who were in bed asleep, were aroused by the shots and herder's cries and without taking time to dress rushed to the assistance of the herder. . . .

The whites were the most numerous and were well armed while the Indians had nothing but bows and arrows. The reds therefore soon found themselves outmatched and took to the hills, while Mendenhall and party assisted the herder to drive the stock back to the corral.

The wily foe then commenced making overtures of peace and one ventured to come to the fort and state that they were sorry. . . . The whites . . . could not well afford to quarrel with the Indians and they felt that their best policy was to appear satisfied with the apology and to smoke with the reds.

We found them thus occupied on our return. The reds, thirteen in number, were all within the fort and I concluded they were a war party of Kootenais and Pend 'Oreilles, probably on their way to have a fight with the Snakes and Bannacks. They remained with us one day after the fight and then crossed the Salmon and we saw them no more.

We now held a council among ourselves and it was finally decided by the train party to abandon the wagons, cache the surplus stores, pack the remainder on the animals, and endeavor to find our way to Deer Lodge.



MISSOULIAN



